GARVEY

Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association form a critical link in black America's centuries-long struggle for freedom, justice, and equality. As the leader of the largest organized mass movement in black history and progenitor of the modern "black is beautiful" ideal, Garvey is now best remembered as a champion of the back-to-Africa movement. In his own time he was hailed as a redeemer, a "Black Moses." Though he failed to realize all his objectives, his movement still represents a liberation from the *psychological* bondage of racial inferiority.

Garvey was born on August 17, 1887 in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica. He left school at 14, worked as a printer, joined Jamaican nationalist organizations, toured Central America, and spent time in London. Content at first with accommodation, on his return to Jamaica, he aspired to open a Tuskegee-type industrial training school. In 1916 he came to America at *Booker T. Washington's* invitation, but arrived just after Washington died.

Garvey arrived in America at the dawn of the "New Negro" era. Black discontent, punctuated by East St. Louis's bloody race riots in 1917 and intensified by *postwar disillusionment*, peaked in 1919's Red Summer. Shortly after arriving, Garvey embarked upon a period of travel and lecturing. When he settled in New York City, he organized a chapter of the U.N.I.A., which he had earlier founded in Jamaica as a fraternal organization. Drawing on a gift for oratory, he *melded Jamaican peasant aspirations for economic and cultural independence with the American gospel of success to create a new gospel of racial pride.* "Garveyism" eventually evolved into a religion of success, inspiring millions of black people worldwide who sought relief from racism and colonialism.

To enrich and strengthen his movement, Garvey envisioned a great shipping line to foster black trade, to transport passengers between America, the Caribbean, and Africa, and to serve as a symbol of black grandeur and enterprise. The U.N.I.A. incorporated the Black Star Line in 1919. The line's flagship, the "S. S. Yarmouth," made its maiden voyage in November and two other ships joined the line in 1920. The Black Star Line became a powerful recruiting tool for the U.N.I.A., but it was ultimately sunk by expensive repairs, discontented crews, and top-level mismanagement and corruption.

By 1920 the U.N.I.A. had hundreds of chapters worldwide; it hosted elaborate international conventions and published The Negro World, a widely disseminated weekly that was soon banned in many parts of Africa and the Caribbean. Over the next few years, however, the movement began to unravel under the strains of internal dissension, opposition from black critics, and government harassment. In 1922 the federal government indicted Garvey on mail fraud charges stemming from Black Star Line promotional claims and he suspended all BSL operations. Two years later, the U.N.I.A. created another line, the Black Cross Navigation and Trading Co., but it, too, failed. Garvey was sentenced to prison. The government later commuted his sentence, only to deport him back to Jamaica in November 1927. He never returned to America.

In Jamaica Garvey reconstituted the U.N.I.A. and held conventions there and in Canada, but the heart of his movement stumbled on in America without him. While he dabbled in local politics, he remained a keen observer of world events, writing voluminously in his own papers. His final move was to London, in 1935. He settled there shortly before Fascist Italy invaded Ethiopia and his public criticisms of Haile Selassie's behavior after the invasion alienated many of his own remaining followers. In his last years he slid into such obscurity that he suffered the final indignity of reading his own obituaries a month before his June 10, 1940 death.

HOOVER

John Edgar Hoover, directed the Federal Bureau of Investigation for more than five decades. As head of the Justice Department, he was responsible for organizing the arrest and deportation of suspected Communists and radicals in the United States.

Marcus Garvey soon rose to the top of Hoover's list. Federal agents, in collaboration with the New York City police, had begun to report on Garvey's speeches as early as 1917. But as Universal Negro Improvement Association membership and the circulation of The Negro World newspaper ballooned in 1919, Hoover himself targeted Garvey. Referring to Garvey as a "notorious negro agitator," Hoover zealously set about to gather damaging evidence on Garvey and his growing movement. "[Hoover and others]feared the hundreds of thousands, the masses of blacks under [Garvey’s] influence. Garvey rejected America, and they could no more agree to and accept a militant rejection of America by blacks than they could accept a militant demand for full inclusion by blacks." Hoover's determination led him to take extreme measures to counter Garvey's growing influence. According to historian Winston James, "They placed spies in the U.N.I.A. They sabotaged the Black Star Line. The engines... of the ships were actually damaged by foreign matter being thrown into the fuel." Decades later, Hoover would again use the methods he developed to counter Garvey's influence -- infiltration by agents, gathering damaging personal information -- against other black leaders such as Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and the Black Panther Party.

X

Earl Little, a Baptist minister born in Reynolds, Georgia, and his second wife, Louise, born in Grenada, British West Indies, were long-standing members of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. Earl Little worked as an organizer for the movement during the 1920s and at one time served as the president of the Omaha, Nebraska U.N.I.A. division. Louise Little served as division secretary, writing reports documenting local U.N.I.A. activities and division meetings for The Negro World newspaper. On May 19, 1925, Louise Little gave birth to a son, Malcolm, who would later be known as Malcolm X. The Littles' involvement in the U.N.I.A. extended to their children. Recalling his father in his autobiography, Malcolm X said, "the image of him that made me proudest was his crusading and militant campaigning with the words of Marcus Garvey ... it was only me that he sometimes took with him to the Garvey U.N.I.A. meetings which he held quietly in different people's homes."

The Little family was often the target of harassment by the Ku Klux Klan. In *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, the author describes an incident, which happened shortly before his birth, in which the K.K.K. arrived at the Little family home one night. Carrying shotguns and rifles, Malcolm X said, the hooded Klansmen warned Louise Little that "'the good Christian white people' were not going to stand for my father's 'spreading trouble' with the 'back to Africa' preachings of Marcus Garvey."

Earl Little died under mysterious circumstances in 1931; Malcolm X believed he had been assassinated. In 1934, Louise Little reportedly suffered a nervous breakdown, and spent many years in a mental institution. Her eight children, including her son Malcolm, were sent to foster homes.

Source: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/peopleevents/p\_little.html